

Effect of Educational Intervention on Preventive Measures against Electronic Sexual Harassment among Preparatory Students

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Abstract

Background: Electronic sexual harassment (ESH) is a controversial issue causing physical, social as well as psychosocial negative effects on preparatory students which consequently can deteriorate their academic achievements. **Aim:** Evaluate the effect of educational intervention on preventive measures against electronic sexual harassment among preparatory students. **Design:** A quasi-experimental design [pretest -posttest] was utilized. **Setting:** Three preparatory schools randomly selected by multistage cluster sampling from the two educational administrations of Zagazig City. **Sample:** A random sample of 150 students was recruited. **Tools:** A self-administered questionnaire consists of four parts; (1) Interview Questionnaire Sheet, (2) Students' Knowledge Regarding ESH, (3) Students' Preventive Measures and Protection Practices Toward ESH, and (4) Sexual Harassment Coping Behaviors Subscale. **Results:** Revealed that the mean age of the students was 8.8158 ± 2.38254 , and about 68.00% of them were females, 15.9% had good knowledge before the educational program, the percentage improved to 78.2% after the educational program, the total preventive measures and protection practices toward electronic sexual harassment scores increased from 32.5% at the pre-phase to 80.9% after the educational program, the percent of the total scores regarding coping behaviors against electronic sexual harassment increased from 24.1 % at the pre-phase to 75.9 % after the educational program. **Conclusion:** Doing the educational program for students was effective in enhancing their knowledge and preventive measures about electronic sexual harassment and also improving their coping behaviors against sexual harassment. **Recommendations:** Implementing the developed program in comparable settings on a broader scale to approve its beneficial effects and allow the findings to be more broadly applied.

Key words: Electronic Sexual Harassment, Preparatory Students, and Preventive Measures.

Introduction:

Social media has been more relevant in children's daily lives lately due to technological advancements and the growing importance of worldwide communication. Web-based social networking websites, which come in a variety of forms such as blogs, social gaming, forums, photo-sharing platforms, business networks, social networks, and chat apps, create, and enable associations, interaction, transformation, sharing, and engagement in an easily available

manner for individuals, families, as well as communities ⁽¹⁾.

Preparatory students engage in a variety of social media activities, including knowledge sharing, innovation, friend communication, and identity construction. Social media and online sharing can help promote positive offline habits, behaviors, and healthful results. Preparatory students who use social media excessively may experience adverse impacts and challenges such as social anxiety, loneliness, low self-esteem, deformed

values, stress, memory loss, poor academic achievement, disorders including lumbar and cervical pain, malnutrition, sleeplessness, impaired functioning in everyday tasks, exposure to sexually explicit material, and cyber stalking ⁽²⁾.

Electronic sexual harassment is defined as the employing of digital communication channels, including social media or the internet, to engage in unwanted sexual advances, explicit content, or any form of online behavior that creates a hostile or uncomfortable environment for the victim. It involves using technology to harass, intimidate, or coerce someone in a sexually explicit or suggestive manner ⁽³⁾.

Preparatory students use new websites or applications to interact with numerous foreigners worldwide. Using images and videos, they reveal all aspects of life as well as their private information, putting them at risk in different ways. When it comes to social media abuse, electronic or digital sexual harassment poses a serious risk to preparatory students ⁽⁴⁾.

A person committing one of the following behaviors: Physical contact and advances containing explicit sexual overtures; requesting sexual favors; exhibiting sexual images against the will; or offering sexually colored remarks ⁽⁵⁾.

Electronic sexual harassment can take various forms, including Unwanted Sexual Messages, non-consensual Sharing of Intimate Content (Revenge Porn) which means Sharing private, explicit images or videos without the consent of the person depicted, also exploiting someone sexually through online means, such as coercing them to engage in explicit activities on camera, in addition to creating a fake online persona, often with a sexual motive, to deceive and manipulate someone emotionally or sexually ⁽⁴⁾.

Community and pediatric health nurses can play an expatriate part in

electronic sexual harassment protection through follow-up, decreasing risk factors, guidance, and learning regarding prevention strategies ⁽⁶⁾. Furthermore, community and pediatric nurses may perform a variety of unconventional tasks to aid victims of electronic sexual harassment in their recovery. They could act as crisis program counselors, victim advocates for the victim with the legal and medical staff, and educators for the victim's partner and any other legal, medical, or mental health experts the victim would interact with. The nurses may help the victim navigate the systems involved in her care by providing a comprehensive response to the patient and carrying out numerous unusual activities. By doing this, the nurses streamline the recovery process, guarantee continuity of care, and aid in the victim's rehabilitation from the trauma caused by electronic sexual harassment ⁽⁷⁻⁸⁾.

Significance of the study:

In Egypt, many children are subjected to various forms of harassment which is never acceptable. Harassment of children is frequently concealed since it is a source of shame that neither the perpetrator nor the victim wants to reveal ⁽⁹⁾. According to Goal 16.2 of the Egypt Vision 2030 Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDGs), children have a right to be protected from all forms of violence, in particular, neglect and abusive treatment. Thus, protection of children against harassment is considered a crucial contemporary goal that begins from infancy ⁽¹⁰⁾.

For preparatory students, internet abuse can lead to several risks, such as sexual harassment, lack of trust, social isolation, suicidal ideation, and a general reduction in the wellness of children. Due to their increased use of electronic communication sites and lack of family responsibilities, young children and teenagers are the most vulnerable to the harmful phenomena known as electronic sexual

harassment. Children are also going through a stage where they are resisting authority, which calls for wise parenting and positive relationships; thus, the current research aimed to evaluate the effect of educational intervention on preventive measures against electronic sexual harassment among preparatory students in response to the Egypt vision 2030.

Aim of the study:

Evaluate the effect of educational intervention on preventive measures against electronic sexual harassment among preparatory students at zagazig city.

This aim was achieved through those objectives:

- Assess students' knowledge, coping behaviors, preventive measures, and protection practices regarding electronic sexual harassment pre and post intervention.
- Develop and implement the educational intervention for prevention of electronic sexual harassment among preparatory students.

Hypothesis:

- Students' knowledge, coping behaviors, preventive measures, and protection practices regarding electronic sexual harassment will be improved after implementation of the program.

Subjects and Method:

Research Design:

A quasi-experimental design was used to conduct this study.

Study Setting:

The study was conducted at three preparatory schools randomly selected from Zagazig City educational administrations. These schools were named Ahmed Oraby, Al Shaheed Mohammed Kamal Abdin, and Al Naseriah Preparatory Schools.

Sample subjects:

The study's subjects were 150 preparatory students who were willing to attend the intervention and were enrolled in the two chosen schools at the time of the study.

Sample size calculation:

The sample size was calculated by using the equation:

$$N = (Z\alpha)^2 \times p \times q / d^2 \text{ (11)}$$

The estimated sample size was:

n = sample size.

Z α = the value of standard normal distribution for type I error probability for the sided test and equals 1.96.

p = 26%.

q = 1- p

d² = the accuracy of estimate = (0.05)²

Sampling technique:

For recruitment of the study participants, the following multistage cluster sampling technique was utilized:

- **First stage:** In this stage, the East and West educational administrations of Zagazig City were selected randomly from the seven educational administrations in the Sharkia governorate.
- **Second stage:** Three schools were chosen randomly by the researchers from the two educational administrations. These schools were Al Naseriah and Ahmed Oraby preparatory schools from Zagazig City's East Educational Administration and Al Shaheed Mohammed Kamal Abdin preparation school from Zagazig City's West Educational Administration.
- **Third stage:** In this stage, classes were chosen randomly from schools as clusters based on the required sample size. The sample included all students in the selected classes. These were as follows:
 1. Al Naseriah preparatory (55 students)

2. Al Shaheed Mohammed Kamal Abdin preparatory school (45 students)
3. Ahmed Oraby preparatory school (50 students)

The ratio was determined based the total number of students obtained from the General Department of Information and Computers, which is affiliated to the Zagazig City Education Department.

Tools of data collection:

Tool (I): A self-administered Questionnaire sheet: It was developed by the researchers, and contained the following five parts:

- **Part one:** This part entails the demographic characteristics of the participated students; such as age, residence, and educational grade.
- **Part two:** This part was developed by the researchers guided by **EI sharkawy et al.** ⁽¹⁾. It contains data regarding the participants' daily use of the internet. It consisted of 7 questions about duration spent on the internet daily, family supervision on internet usage, and parental discussion of electronic sexual harassment.

Tool (II): students' knowledge regarding electronic sexual harassment: This tool was developed by the researchers. It contains 15 Arabic items to assess definitions, types, sources of electronic sexual harassment, and negative effects of electronic sexual harassment, rules, and laws in Egypt about electronic sexual harassment.

Scoring system:

The studied participants' knowledge was calculated for each item as follows: good as (2); fair as (1), and poor as (0). The total knowledge score was divided into good >60%, fair ≥ 50-60%, and poor knowledge <50%.

Tool (III): Students' preventive measures and protection practices toward electronic sexual harassment: According to **EI-Guindi et al.** ⁽¹²⁾, this tool included 19 items, such as blocking the harasser, asking them to stop, shouting or pleading for help, threatening to report the harasser to school or family, and notifying the harasser to family or friends.

Scoring system:

Scoring was according to the Likert scale, ranging from scores (0) for Not done, and (1) for done. Total scores were summed either 60% and above representing done or less than 60% not done.

Tool (IV): The sexual harassment coping behaviors subscale: This tool was adopted from **Chao et al.** ⁽¹³⁾ and the researchers translated it into Arabic. The participants described their actual or potential coping mechanisms for dealing with sexual harassment if they had never experienced it. There are 37 questions in the subscale, all of which are related to verbal and nonverbal sexual harassment. This makes a total of 74 questions.

Scoring system:

The four categories of coping behaviors were: Solving the problem (e.g., moving to block the harasser); reconsidering cognition (e.g., reporting to my family); modifying emotion (e.g., ignoring it); and emitting emotion (e.g., ironically mocking the harasser). The total score ranged from 0 to 296. Each question was graded on a scale of 0 (never) to 4 (always).

Tool validity and reliability:

The validity of the study tool was ascertained by a panel of experts in community health nursing, psychiatric and pediatric nursing who conducted validity of all the items of this tool. The panel also revised accuracy, format, consistency and relevancy of the tool. All recommended modifications were performed. Reliability testing was carried out to test the reliability in

terms of the value of Cronbach's Alpha which was 0.791.

Pilot Study

The purpose of the pilot study was to ascertain the study tool's applicability, reliability and clarity as well as to determine the required time needed to fill it. It was conducted on a sample of 15 students who represent 10% of the estimated overall sample size. The students were enrolled in the main study sample as there were no modifications in the study tool based on the pilot study.

Field work:

The researchers carried out a thorough analysis of the relevant literature from the past and present, encompassing a variety of topics linked to "electronic sexual harassment" and related knowledge, preventive methods, and coping mechanisms. The available textbooks and papers from scientific journals and periodicals were used to do this. A panel of nursing specialists evaluated the tools in their preliminary forms for face and content validation based on this review. The review was also helpful in creating the educational program's fundamental framework.

An informed oral consent was taken from students. The researchers gathered the students' cooperation and confidence by meeting with them, introducing themselves, and outlining the goal of the study to get their agreement to participate.

To ensure that the inclusion requirements were satisfied, each participant was questioned one-on-one before the scheduled sessions for gathering baseline data using all study instruments.

The researchers began using the sample to fill out the questionnaire. The students' replies to each question were recorded by the researchers after they had read and clarified it to them. It took between 35 and 50 minutes to complete.

The study was carried out in four stages: planning, evaluation, application, and assessment. This continued for 7 months from the first of October 2023 to the end of April 2024 (There were two months off because of the exams and, vacation between terms).

To prevent electronic sexual harassment, the educational program aimed to increase students' awareness of the problem, their ability to recognize and avoid it, and their strategies for dealing with it.

The educational program was implemented in the form of 12 sessions (10 sessions for the content, and two sessions for the starting and ending of the program). Every session lasted for 30-45 minutes. In each class at the school, the educational program was conducted in small, homogeneous groups of 5-10 participants, depending on attendance, free classes, and study schedules. Each study group received two sessions per week from the instructors. They took place on Tuesday and Wednesdays.

A variety of teaching methods, including brief lectures, brainstorming, group discussions, films, demonstration re-demonstration, and role-playing, were used to accomplish the educational program. A manual, a few quick films, and PowerPoint slides made up the instructional materials.

Each session began with a synopsis of the material covered in the prior one and the goals for the current one, with an emphasis on ensuring that students understood the material while also making use of simple language appropriate for their age and educational level. During the session, motivational and reinforcement strategies such as praise and acknowledgment were employed to increase learning and participation. The researchers created a short Arabic instructional booklet that would be given to the participants under study.

Description of the educational program:

General objective of the program: Improving the knowledge, preventive measures practice, and coping behaviors against electronic sexual harassment of the students.

- **Specific objectives:**

By the end of this program:

- The students would have the opportunity to talk about basic facts regarding electronic sexual harassment.
- Concerning the specific problem, the students will be able to list the major issues they have with their families and with themselves.
- The students will be capable of appropriately handling their inappropriate actions.
- The students will use constructive preventive strategies and coping mechanisms to address the issue.

The educational program sessions consisted of two main components:

- **The first component** was giving a background of electronic sexual harassment such as patterns, definition, effects and types, side effects, and rules and laws in Egypt about electronic sexual harassment; (5 sessions).
- **The second main component** was giving preventive practical sessions and coping behaviors against sexual harassment problems (5 sessions).
- There were 2 sessions for starting and ending the educational program sessions.

Evaluation phase:

By the end of the educational program sessions. An assessment was made to evaluate the impact of the educational program.

Administrative and Ethical considerations:

The current research obtained ethical approval from the Research

Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Nursing of Zagazig University, Zagazig, Egypt.

Based on letters from the Faculty of Nursing outlining the aim and methods of the study, official permission was attained from Zagazig's Education Directorate. With letters of approval, the Director General sent the researchers to the directors of the chosen schools. After that, the researcher met with each of them and gave them an explanation of the study's aim, methods and the tools of data collection method being utilised.

The students' privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity were guaranteed. The participated students were made aware of their right to refuse to participate in the study and their ability to engage voluntarily. At the start of the study, informed consent was taken from participants.

Statistical analysis:

The SPSS statistical software program version 20.0 was used to enter data and conduct statistical analysis. For qualitative variables, data were presented using frequencies and percentages; for quantitative variables, data were presented using means, standard deviations, and medians. Chi-square test was used to compare qualitative category variables. Where anticipated values in one or more cells in a 2x2 table were less than 5, the Fisher exact test was utilized instead. The Spearman rank correlation coefficient was employed to analyze the correlations between quantitative and ranking variables.

Results:

Table (1): Shows the demographic characteristics of preparatory students. The mean age of the students was 8.8158 ± 2.38254 , and about 68.00% of them were females.

Table (2): Shows the characteristics of studied students regarding using the internet; 90% of the students used their personal phones to access the internet 50% of

them used the internet more than 4 hours/daily, all of the students used social media application and 53.3% of them visited the sexual sites. The table also reported that 68.00% of the students had a good relationship with their parents, but 74.00% of the students said no family supervision about internet use, 93.3% of the students reported no parenteral discussion about electronic sexual harassment and 98.00% of them reported no workshops about electronic sexual harassment done in their schools.

Figure (1): Shows the distribution of studied students' knowledge regarding electronic sexual harassment. The data showed that the student's understanding of electronic sexual harassment had significantly improved ($p < 0.001$) in the post-educational program phase. Overall, 15.9% had good knowledge before the educational program and this elevated to 78.2% after the educational program.

Figure (2): Shows the total scores of students' preventive measures and protection practices toward electronic sexual harassment among studied subjects. The figure showed statistically significant total improvements in the preventive measures and protection practices toward electronic sexual harassment of students at ($p < 0.001$) in the post-intervention phase. Overall, the total preventive measures and protection practices toward electronic sexual harassment scores increased from 32.5% in the pre-phase to 80.9% after the educational program.

Figure (3): Shows the students' coping behaviors against electronic sexual harassment. The figure revealed statistically significant total improvements in the students' coping behaviors against electronic sexual harassment at ($p < 0.001$) in the post-educational program phase. Overall, the percentage of the total scores regarding coping behaviors against electronic sexual harassment

increased from 24.1 % in the pre-phase to 75.9 % after the educational program.

The association between students in the study sample's knowledge, coping mechanisms, and preventive measures and electronic sexual harassment was shown in **table (3)**. It proved that there was a negative correlation between the students' knowledge, preventive measures, coping mechanisms, and electronic sexual harassment.

Discussion:

According to the current study results, the majority of students used their personal phones to access the internet with most of them using the internet more than 4 hours/daily. This might be attributed to the excessive use of the internet and smart phones in society recently and also due to the availability of personal phones for every member of the family.

The current findings were in line with **Radwan et al.** ⁽¹⁴⁾ in Egypt who reported that 95.8% of their participants used the internet on their smartphones. However; those current results disagreed with **El-Zogh et al.** ⁽¹⁵⁾ in Egypt, who reported that 57.6% of their students had internet addiction and used their phones and internet daily for more than two hours. Similar to those results, **Radwan et al.** ⁽¹⁴⁾ in Egypt reported half of their secondary school students who participated in their research as using their internet for more than 2 hours per day.

The present study findings showed statistically significant total improvements in the students' knowledge concerning electronic sexual harassment, students' preventive measures, and protection practices toward electronic sexual harassment, additionally, the study showed astatistically significant improvement in students' coping behaviors against electronic sexual harassment at ($p < 0.001$) in the post-educational program phase. These beneficial changes to the participant's

level of knowledge may clarify the beneficial effects of the teaching sessions as well as how the subjects behaved cooperatively and with interest during the program.

Related to the level of knowledge of the studied subjects before the educational program; the present results reported that over half of the sample had a poor level of knowledge regarding electronic sexual harassment. This might be due to embarrassment regarding searching about anything related to sexuality problems; also those results could be explained by the current results because the majority of the studied sample reported no parenteral discussion about electronic sexual harassment and also reported no workshops about electronic sexual harassment done in their schools.

The current study results were similar to **Zaki et al.** ⁽¹⁶⁾ in Saudi Arabia as they revealed the poor level of knowledge for more than half of their subjects. On the other hand, this is in disagreement with the study of **Mahmoud and Hassan** ⁽⁷⁾ in Egypt, who reported that 69.7% of the participants had poor level of sexual harassment.

After the implementation of the educational program, there were statistically significant improvements as the level of good knowledge increased among most of the participants. Consistently, the previous Egyptian study of **Abd-Elraheem et al.** ⁽¹⁷⁾ the study of found that health educational guidelines were effective in improving perception and level of knowledge about prevention of sexual harassment among preparatory male students and raise their awareness regarding self-protection against sexual harassment. Furthermore, the study of **Agardh et al.** ⁽¹⁸⁾ in Sweden reported that a significant improvement in the subjects' overall satisfactory knowledge of sexual harassment was evident after the implementation of an educational program. Between the pre and post-

educational program periods, there was a significant improvement in the students' satisfactory knowledge ($p < 0.001$).

Regarding the total preventive measures and protection practices toward electronic sexual harassment among the studied sample; the total scores increased from the pre-phase to after the educational program and the majority of the students took those preventive measures.

Similar to those results, **Bonara et al.** ⁽¹⁹⁾ in the USA reported positive improvements among their subjects post their intervention in their participant's behaviors to protect themselves against sexual harassment. In the same way, **Fatouh et al.** ⁽²⁰⁾ in Egypt, reported that before the educational program, 49.09% of the subjects exhibited positive behavior to shield their kids from sexual harassment, but after the program, that percentage increased to 100%. The variations between the pre and post-educational programs were statistically significant.

Regarding the students' coping behaviors against electronic sexual harassment, this study revealed statistically significant total improvements in the students' coping behaviors against electronic sexual harassment at ($p < 0.001$) in the post-educational program phase. Overall, the percent of the total scores regarding coping behaviors against electronic sexual harassment increased among most of the studied sample. Similar to those results, **Lu et al.** ⁽⁶⁾ revealed in their systematic review that the coping strategies were effective against the negative effects of sexual abuse among students and also reviewed that strategies seem to work better on children 8 years of age and up than on younger ones.

According to the current study results, there was a significant relation between electronic sexual harassment and the level of knowledge, preventive measures, and coping behaviors of the

students. This means when the knowledge, preventive measures, and coping behaviors of the students increase, the incidence of electronic sexual harassment and its negative effects will be decreased. Those results agreed with the previous findings of **Bolduc et al.** ⁽²¹⁾, **Sutton et al.** ⁽²²⁾, and **Pinchevsky et al.** ⁽²³⁾ as they reported negative correlations between the sexual harassment problem and the level of knowledge, awareness among their participants at ($p < 0.05$), and ($p < 0.001$).

Conclusion:

According to the current study results, it was concluded that there were statistically significant total improvements in the students' knowledge regarding electronic sexual harassment, the total scores of students' preventive measures and protection practices toward electronic sexual harassment. Also, there was a statistically significant total improvement in the students' coping behaviors against electronic sexual harassment in the post-educational program phase. Therefore, the

implemented program was effective in ameliorating preventive measures against electronic sexual harassment among preparatory students.

Recommendations:

Based on the study's findings, the following suggestions could be made:

1. Implementing the developed program in comparable settings on a broader scale to approve its beneficial effects and allow the findings to be more broadly applied.
2. Educational booklets about electronic sexual harassment and its prevention and coping strategies should be given to school students.
3. Further researches should continue to identify determinants of electronic harassment to assist in building more tailored interventions that empower school children in order to advocate for themselves against electronic sexual harassment.

Table (1): Distribution of socio-demographic characteristics of studied students in the study sample (n=150)

Demographic characteristics	Frequency	%
Age (in years)		
11≥12	60	40.00
13-14	81	54.00
14≤15	9	6.00
Mean±SD	8.8158±2.38254	
Gender		
Female	102	68.00
Male	48	32.00
Residence		
Rural	89	59.3
Urban	61	40.7
Educational Grade		
1st	68	45.3
2nd	79	52.7
3rd	3	2.00

Table (2): Distribution of studied students in the study sample regarding using of internet (n=150)

Items	Frequency	%
Access to online social media applications*		
Personal phones	135	90.00
Computer	25	16.7
Laptop	35	23.00
Phones of family member	100	66.7
Common used internet platforms*:		
Social media such as Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp.....etc.)	150	100.00
Games	140	93.3
Learning Sites	65	43.3
Sexual sites	80	53.3
Others	144	96.00
Duration spent on internet daily		
< 0.5 hour	10	6.7
0.5 to < 2	45	30.00
2 to < 4	20	13.3
≥ 4	75	50.00
Presence of good relationship with parents		
Yes	102	68.00
No	48	32.00
Family supervision on internet usage		
Yes	39	26.00
No	111	74
Parental discussion of electronic sexual harassment:		
Yes	10	6.7
No	140	93.3
School workshops about electronic sexual harassment		
Yes	3	2.00
No	147	98.00

* More than one answer is allowed in some questions

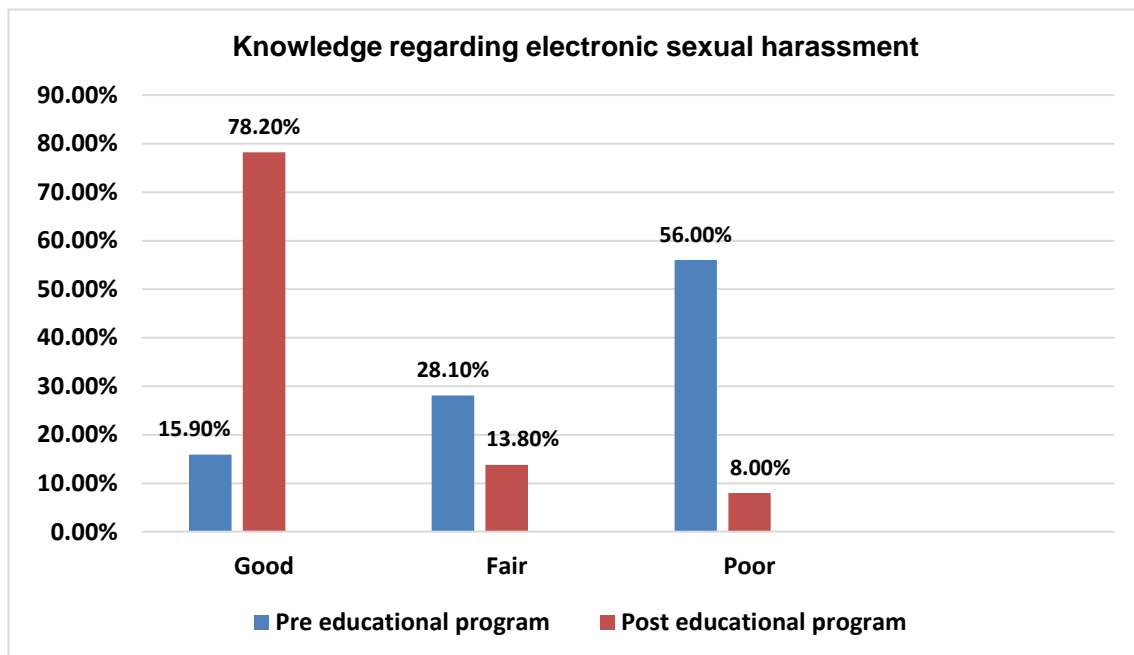


Figure (1): Distribution of studied students' knowledge regarding electronic sexual harassment (n=150)

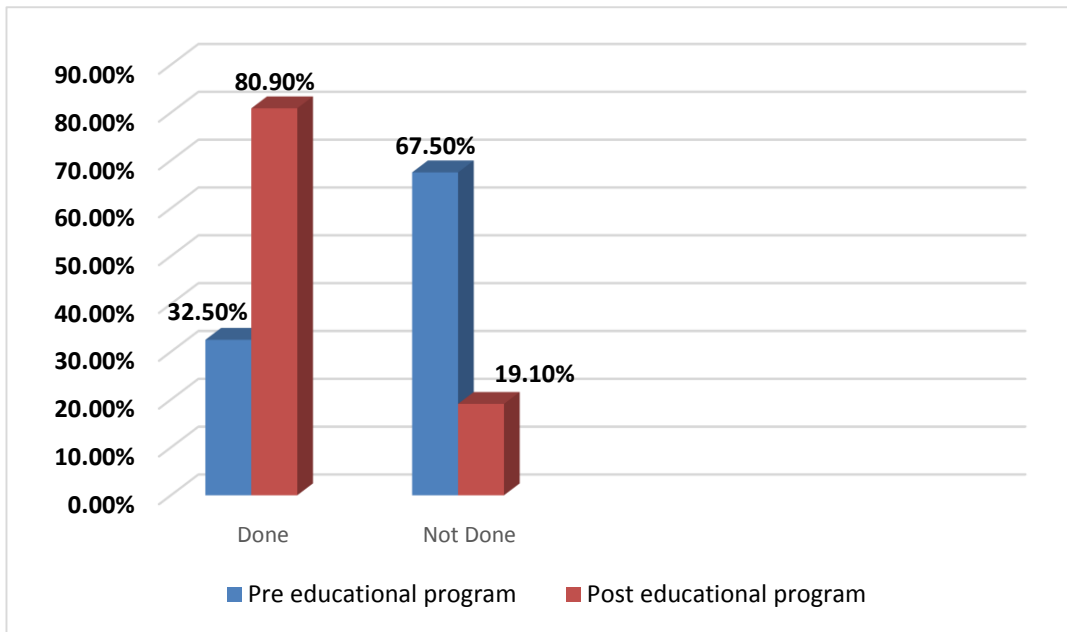


Figure (2): Distribution of studied students’ preventive measures and protection practices toward electronic sexual harassment pre/post educational program (n=150)

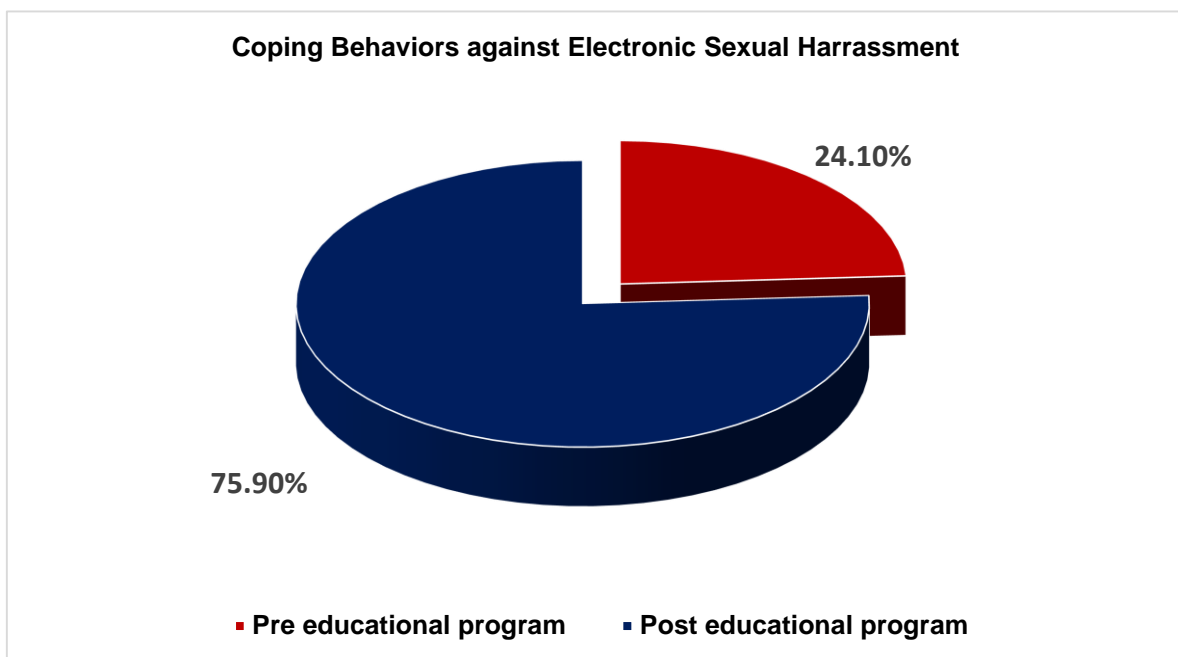


Figure (3): Distribution of studied students’ coping behaviors against electronic sexual harassment pre/post educational program (n=150)

Table (3): Correlation among Electronic sexual harassment and knowledge, coping behaviors, and preventive measures of students in the study sample (n=150)

Variables	Electronic sexual harassment	
	r	P value
Knowledge regarding electronic sexual harassment	-.874**	.000
Coping behaviors against electronic sexual harassment	-.783**	.000
Preventive measures and protection practices toward electronic sexual harassment	-.735**	.000

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